FIFTH REPORT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS (1993-94)

TENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

SUBURBAN RAILWAYS

Presented to Lok Sabha on 23.2.94
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 23.2.94

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

February, 1994/Phalguna, 1915 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS
(1993-94)

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** Nominated w.e.f. 3 May, 1993 *vice* Shri T.J. Anjalose resigned.

*** Vacancy caused consequent upon resignation of Sh. Vishwasrao Ramrao Patil

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SECRETARIAT

1. Shri G.L. Batra — *Additional Secretary*
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3. Shri T.D. Dhingra — *Under Secretary*

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Railways having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present their Fifth Report on Ministry of Railways-Suburban Railways.

2. The Committee appointed a Study Group to examine the subject of suburban Railways. The Study Group made extensive study on the subject and held several informal rounds of discussion with the Member (Traffic) and other representatives of the Ministry of Railways, including the General Managers of Zonal Railways. The Study Group also undertook a tour to the three suburban cities, i.e., Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and held discussion with commuters associations, representatives and also the Suburban Railway Management on the working of Suburban Railways.

3. The Committee have noted that the suburban services cater mainly to daily commuters, namely factory workers, office goers etc. who play a vital role in the economic activities of the country. The Committee have observed that there is urgent need for augmenting the suburban service by increasing the number of rakes and also by diversifing the suburban traffic to alternative routes to decongest the existing routes.

4. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry of Railways for furnishing the material and information which they desired in the connection with the examination of the subject.

5. The Report was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on Railways on 21.02.1994. For facility of reference ,the recommendations /observations of the Committee have been printed in thick type.

NEW DELHI;
February 21, 1994

2 Phalguna, 1915 (Saka)

SOMNATH CHATTERJEE
Chairman
Standing Committee on Railways

REPORT

SUBURBAN RAILWAYS

Introductory

1. Suburban rail services are those shuttle services which serve the population of large cities with reference to the working hours in offices, industrial establishments, educational institutions etc. Suburban services were introduced in three metropolitan cities of India, viz, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. These being the port cities and easily accessible by sea were the first to become centres of trade and industry and therefore EMU were introduced in these cities to cater to mass passenger transport need.

2. Organisation to administer and control the suburban rail services in each of the metropolitan cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras is Divisional Organisation headed by the Divisional Railway Manager who is assisted by the Additional DRMs and officers and staff of the Operations, Commercial, Civil Engineering, Signal and Telecom., Electrical Engineering etc. Details of Divisions in each of the above suburban areas are as follows:

i. Bombay:

Bombay area has two Divisions, namely, Bombay division of Central Railway with Headquarters at Bombay V.T. and Bombay Division of Western Railway with Headquarters at Bombay Central.

ii. Calcutta:

Three Divisions of Indian Railways are presently serving the suburbs of Calcutta. These are—Howrah and Scaldah Divisions of Eastern Railway and Kharagpur Division of South Eastern Railway.

iii. Madras:

In Madras area, there is only one Division, namely, Madras Division of Southern Railway to administer and control the suburban rail services.

3. The length of suburban rail routes in and around all the three metropolitan cities is as under:

Suburban Area	Route Kms.
1	2
1. **Bombay:**	
a. Western Railways	60.61
b. Central Railways	202.20

1	2
2. **Calcutta:**	
a. Eastern Railways	613.87
b. South Eastern Railways	225.00
3. **Madras:**	
Southern Railways	166.56

4. Suburban railways are the life line of all the above three metropolitan cities. The operational problems in suburban trains running are generally specific to the cities concerned. Hence in order to have a clear understanding of the operational difficulties of Suburban Railway system in the country, the Standing Committee on Railways appointed a separate Study Group to examine the subject in detail. The Study Group held several rounds of informal discussion with Member (Traffic) Railway Board and other officials of the Ministry of Railways including General Managers of Zonal Railways and undertook a study tour for on the spot study of the functioning of suburban railways in the cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

The Study Group visited the suburban railway stations in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras from 7th to 9th February, 1994 during the peak hours and non-peak hours and held discussion with several commuter associations peoples representatives (MPs, MLAs etc. of the cities) and heard their views on the problems of the commuters and scope for improvement of the suburban railways. Subsequently they also discussed the problems with concerned General Managers and Senior Officers.

Suburban Railway Traffic

5. The Ministry of Railways have stated that there has been a drop in suburban railway passenger kms. as well as the number of suburban passenger over the Indian Railways as a whole in 1992-93. The passenger kilometres (billions) of suburban traffic carried during the last three years are given below:

Year	P.kms. (Billions)	% age growth
1990-91	59.57	8.7%
1991-92	63.39	6.4%
1992-93	60.45	−5.2%

The Railways have furnished the following information regarding average number of passenger originating daily in the Suburban Sections:

(in thousand)

	1991-92	1992-93
Bombay	4786	4558
Calcutta	1335	1207
Madras	482	483

6. The Ministry had originally projected a growth rate of 5% for suburban passenger traffic for VIII five year plan.

7. The representative of Ministry of Railways explaining the reasons for fall in suburban traffic stated that it could be due to peoples change of choice for travel, improvement in the road transport/water transport facilities, etc. He also admitted that ticketless travelling also might have contributed to this fall in passenger traffic as it is determined by the number of tickets sold.

Growth in passenger traffic vis-a-vis in E.M.U. Stock and Overcrowding in Suburban Traffic

8. On a question of annual growth of Suburban Traffic and the corresponding increase in the number of train services during the last ten years, the Ministry in their written note have furnished in following information:

	Year	P.km. (in millions)	%growth in 10 years	No. of EMU trains run	%growth in 10 years
Bombay	1983-84	28243		598037	
	1992-93	41216	+45.93	711547	+18.98
Calcutta	1983-84	11315		284291	
	1992-93	15743	+39.13	306149	+7.69
Madras					
	1983-84	2542		144292	
	1992-93	3469	+36.47	174916	+21.22

9. In this context the Ministry of Railways have also stated:

"Number of rakes and line capacity have been increasing, but not proportionate to the increase in suburban passenger traffic, because there are other means like augmentation of composition of rakes for increasing the passenger carrying capacity of a suburban train."

10. The Committee during the tour to the Suburban cities found that there was too much overcrowding in suburban trains during peak hours. As regards the steps taken to prevent overcrowding in suburban train the Ministry in a written note furnished the following information:

"There is overcrowding in Suburban Trains during peak hours. In order to ease the overcrowding the following measures have been taken and the process is on:

(i) Increase in the frequency of suburban trains by reduction of headway between two successive trains from 5 minutes to 4 minutes and finally to 3 minutes in Bombay.

(ii) Running of longer EMU rakes of 10—12 coaches selectively.

(iii) Acquisition of more EMU coaches.

(iv) Doubling of single line suburban sections.

(v) Provision of double discharge platforms.

(vi) Construction of fifth line from Bandra to Bombay Central and release the capacity on the suburban corridors for running more local trains.

(vii) Completion of the Mankhurd-Belapur new line and connecting new Bombay to Bombay.

(viii) Introduction of diesel push-pull trains.

(ix) Conversion of metre guage suburban section to broad guage in Madras.

(x) Introduction of narrow-bodied EMU rakes."

11. Keeping in view the continued overcrowding in Suburban trains and inability of the Railway administration to mitigate the sufferings of daily commuters by way of providing more number of trains during peak hours the Committee discussed the question of diversification of Railway line and the problem was discussed by the Study Group of the Committee during their visit to metropolitan cities.

12. At Howrah and Calcutta during discussion with the commuters' association, MPs, MLAs and local bodies the following suggestions were received:

(i) extension of suburban areas upto Asansol;

(ii) on the South Eastern Railway route should be extended up to Kharagpur-Midnapur-Jhargram and EMU locals to run on this route;

(iii) Construction of a third line in suburban section between Pan-sakura-Kharagpur;

(iv) Bandel-Katwa electrification project to be completed as scheduled and DMU to run on Bandel-Katwa section till electrification is completed. To have full advantage this section should have double track;

(v) Howrah-Amta line to be completed;

(vi) Majerhat-Pricepghat section to be completed;

(vii) doubling of Habra-Bongaon section;

(viii) separate track for EMU locals;

(ix) Barasat Barishat section to be doubled for EMU;

(x) More locals for Budge-Budge and other south sections of Eastern Railways;

(xi) need of 4th line between Howrah and Sheoraphuli;

(xii) works on Howrah-Siakhala section to be completed on priority basis;

(xiii) 4th line to be completed in Andul-Kharagpur section;

(xiv) Kharagpur to be connected with Scaldah via Dankani and Baghnan in South Eastern Railway may be made a terminal point;

(xv) road link between Howrah-Shalimar to be completed;

(xvi) Station building should be adjoining to Station Platforms;

(xvii) Calcutta circular rail to be completed by connecting princepghat-Majerhat at the earliest and connected with Metro Rail;

(xviii) some sections of Eastern and South Eastern Railways on the Western Bank of river Hooghly may be connected with Calcutta city through a tunnel under the river Hooghly and connected with Metro;

(xix) An additional Suburban train (all stoppage) to be introduced between Howrah and Bandel at least up to Sheoraphuli in the Afternoon and a fourth line upto Bandel to be opened;

(xx) Electrification of Ranaghat Gode Section to be completed for running EMU;

(xxi) An additional local for Howrah Konnepur;

(xxii) One halt Station with ticket issue facility in between Barhyhati and Bhadrashwar;

13. At Madras during discussion with Commuters Associations, MPs and MLAs the following suggestions were offered:

(i) Madras circular Railway be introduced and completed early;

(ii) two more corridors may be constructed to ease overcrowding;

(iii) priority be given for conversion of certain MG sector of Madras Railways to BG.

(iv) periodic meeting with commuters association to discuss their problems regarding suburban services.

(v) suburban rail time table should be reviewed and adjusted to meet the need of commuters.

(vi) suburban EMU should run on separate track other than main line;

(vii) automatic signaling system to be introduced to facilitate movement of EMUs;

(viii) frequency of services to be increased;

(ix) security in coaches to be tightened.

14. At Bombay during discussion with Commuters' Associations, advocates, MPs, MLAs, and representatives of other sections of people, a large number of suggestion were received. Important among them are enumerated below:—

(i) there should be periodical meeting of DRMs/GM with the passengers associations to sort out the problems of commuters.

(ii) Bombay should have an independent unit for manufacture and maintenance of DC current rakes.

(iii) rakes should be maintained properly.

(iv) a separate cell headed by senior officer to deal with complaints/ suggestions.

(v) more No. of corridoors say upto 6 to 7 for densely populated area.

(vi) more number of EMU rakes to be introduced.

(vii) railway timings to be reviewed and recast.

(viii) more cyclic time table to be introduced.

(ix) linkages to be established in delinked places.

(x) computerised monthly tickets be made available at intermediate stations.

(xi) RPF prosonnel to be deputed as a security measures.

(xii) a lady RPF personnel may also be posted in lady's compartment.

(xiii) suburban fare should not be steeply increased because poor and common people travel by suburban rails.

(xiv) separate zone for suburban railways to be created/need to have a separate corporation or authority.

(xv) over-bridges to be constructed over level crossings to avoid late-running.

(xvi) old and outdated rakes/coaches to be replaced in phased manner.

(xvii) more special Mahila (women) train to the operated and more compartment should be reserved for lady commuters in existing trains.

(xviii) local trains should also be introduced between Borivli-Virar and Borivli-Dahanu road.

In addition the following suggestions regarding diversification of traffic in the Western and Central Railways to ease the problem of commuters in Bombay were received;

a. Nhava-Sheva (J.N.P.) line (DMU);

b. Thal-Vaishet (R.C.F.) line (DMU);

c. Veer/Dasgoan-Roha line upto Kurla line;

d. Vasai-Diva line (DMU) with particular reference to Bhiwandi Road Station; Bhiwandi being industrial and commercial centre near Bombay;

e. Karjat-Khopoli line (electrification); and

f. Panvel-Karjat linkage (saving 40 kms. of distance)

Revenue Earned from Suburban Railways

15. The Ministry have given the following data in respect of Revenue earned and the operational loss incurred by each suburban service during the last three years:

	BOMBAY		CALCUTTA		MADRAS	
	C.Rly	W.Rly	E.Rly	S.E.Rly.	S.Rly.	
					BG	MG
1990-91						
Revenue	122.30	125.81	86.15	11.71	8.40	13.48
Operational Losses/ Profits (−) (+)	(−)16.60	(+)8.43	(−)120.76	(−)33.81	(−)34.59	(−)9.98
1991-92						
Revenue	134.70	151.72	96.82	12.81	9.85	16.00
Operational Losses/ Profits (−) (+)	(−)7.81	(+)24.91	(−)150.64	(−)32.23	(−)37.78	(−)9.14
1992-93						
Revenue	177.97	189.12	108.48	14.18	12.22	19.79
Operational Losses/ Profits (−) (+)	(−)7.13	(+)49.95	(−)155.88	(−)45.07	(−)43.93	(−)13.64

The Ministry have stated that entire losses on the suburban services are corss-subsidised by the Indian Railways other segments, like Freight traffic and long distance passenger traffic.

16. The Western Railway earned profit during 1990-91 and 1991-92 and 1992-93 and operational losses in Central Railways have progressively been declining during the last three years. In Eastern Railways, the operational losses have increased during the last three years while there is only a marginal increase in revenue earned during the three years. In the South Eastern Railways while there is a decline in operational loss during 1991-92 as compared to 1990-91, the operational loss increased substantially during 1992-93. The Southern Railway also showed progressive increase in operational loss during the years with marginal increase in revenue earned.

17. As regards measures being taken by the Government to improve revenue earnings of Suburban Railways and bring down/eliminate operating losses, the Ministry of Railways in their written note have stated:

> "For cutting down the operating losses, productivity of the assets e.g. line capacity, EMUs is being increased by planning to run longer EMU rakes of upto 12-coach each. In addition modernisation of rolling stock with more energy efficient stock is being gradually introduced. Ticket checking drives are being intensified to increase revenue. At the same time all round economy measures like reduction in manpower and tighter control on maintenance and stores are being taken."

18. During the course of study tour, the Committee discussed in detail with the representatives of Commuters, Associations, Hawkers, Associations and other local bodies at Calcutta the reasons for increasing operational losses in Eastern and South Eastern Railways. Most of the representatives expressed the view that due to steep rise in fares and monthly passes, it has become increasingly difficult for low-income group and unemployed persons to purchase the tickets. Even the representatives of Hawkers' Associations said that due to their nominal income not sufficient enough for survival they are not in a position to purchase the tickets.

19. However, when the Railway Management was asked to explain the steps taken to plug the slippages of revenue due to ticketless travelling by the people, they explained that during peak hours it was not possible for them to undertake daily checking. Besides, at time when they intensify checking for ticketless travelling, they were not treated well by the passengers and the railway staff. As such they are not in a position to intensify their checking. Although Commuters, Associations of Calcutta have stated that percentage of ticketless passengers would be around 45% to 50% of the total suburban passengers, Railway Management has nothing on record to prove this contension. In Central and Western Railways, the Commuters, Associations at Bombay stated that ticketless travelling would be very few and in any case their percentage would not exceed 10 to 15%. In Southern Railway too, representatives of the Commuters' Associations stated that there would be some commuters travelling without ticket. As regards suggestions for improvement in suburban traffic revenue, a number of suggestions were offered by the Commuters, Associations at different places:

1. To reduce fares of suburban travelling and bring it at par with bus fares.

2. To open more booking counters outside the railway stations so that before entry to the railway station purchasing of tickets could be ensured.

3. To undertake frequent checking by railways with the help of Railway Protection Force before approaching the suburban cities.

4. Issue of concessional passes to physically handicapped and economically weaker sections of the people.

5. Sagregating the coaches and providing more coaches for vendors, women and physically handicapped etc.

6. Introduction of more trains at shorter intervals.

7. To increase the capacity of existing locals and adding more coaches to them.

8. In Bombay suburban area, Mankhurd—Belapur line under construction be further extended to Panvel.

9. Karjat—Khapoli line be electrified urgently.

20. During study tour the Study Group discussed the problem of Suburban Railways with the General Managers of Railways. Asked to react to various issues raised by the Commuters. Associations etc. they stated that the Railways are providing maximum number of coaches available with them and even though their earnings have not been in commensurate with the number of coaches provided. As regards introductions of more locals at shorter intervals, existing capacity of the lines do not leave much scope for introducing of more number of locals during the peak hours.

21. In Western Central Railway, however, the Government was going to construct some more lines, 5 or 6 and introducing some more lines to cope with the increasing number of passengers and more number of local trains will be introduced after completion of new parallel lines.

Punctuality in Suburban Trains

22. As regards maintenance of the punctuality in the suburban services, Railway Management was of the view that while efforts were being made to run the EMU trains on time, due to large number of level crossings and detention of any one train for even a short duration which has a chain effect on the running of other trains, the late running become inevitable.

23. In this regard explaining the position, the Ministry of Railways in a written note furnished to the Committee have also stated:

"Surface road crossings adversely affect the running of Suburban services in all the cities. As per rule, Suburban trains should not get detained for passage for road traffic but in practice during peak

hours, since the road transport also serve the daily commuters, the suburban trains are detained at signals closer to level crossings. Even though the State Governments and Railway Administration have agreed in principle for provision of additional ROBs/RUB's/ FORs, the progress of work is slow. The execution of these works involve coordination of various agencies like Telecommunication, Municipal Corporations, etc. Litigation by interested parties also delays the work inordinately."

However in a note submitted to the Committee, the Bombay Commuters Council have opined that major factors responsible for delays are defective time table and absence of planning on the part of Railways. The Commuters' Associations have expressed the view that the time tables are not scientifically prepared and based on old pattern framed in 1977.

Allocation for Suburban Railways

24. In reply to a question as to whether any separate fund allocation has been made by Planning Commission for suburban service the Ministry in written note has stated:

"No separate allocation have been made by Planning Commission for suburban service. Funds for augmentation of existing suburban service wherever felt justified are made available by the Ministry of Railways out of the allocation under the existing plan heads. Separate allocation for suburban service by the Planning Commission is not felt necessary because development of the existing suburban railways system has to be made from the available resources.

However, separate allocation is made under the plan head M.T.P. for metropolitan projects."

25. The Railways have admitted that there was need to pay special attention to the suburban traffic but they were handicapped due to shortage of funds. Clarifying this position the Ministry in their written note stated:

"Development requirement of rail transport infrastructure is planned on an integrated basis. Keeping in view the over all budgetary constraints, an integrated planning ensure that limited financial resources are optimally invested. All the rail transport segments compete for same resources. Annual Planning exercise has necessarily to be done, keeping in view the requirement of each segment.

26. The Study Group of the Committee which examined the matter in detail observed that according to the Status paper on Indian Railways, in 1988-89, the percentage of Suburban passengers was 57.3 and that of non-Suburban passengers was 42.7. On an enquiry about the Budget allocations for these two categories for the year 1991-92, 1992-93, and 1993-94 the Ministry stated:

"Budget allocations are made on integrated requirement of the system. The suburban railway systems infrastructure in fact carry suburban traffic, non-suburban traffic as well as freight traffic. Strictly speaking, it becomes difficult to segregate budget allocations exclusively for each of the above segments. Some of the items, however, can be exclusively identified as pertaining to suburban traffic like EMU rolling stock, EM car sheds, etc."

27. On an enquiry about the subsidy given for suburban Railways in other countries the Ministry furnished some informations, information about subsidy to commuter traffic in foreign railways was not readily available, and the information available to the extent of percentage of social obligations—reimbursed to the total revenue earned by a few foreign Railways were as given below:

	Railway System	Passenger earnings (in millions)	Subsidy	Total Revenue earnings (in million)	% Subsidy to total revenue
1.	British Railways	£2243.9	£651.1	£2905.8	22.4%
2.	Swiss Federal	SWER 1572.0	SWER 2100	SWER 58820	35.7%
3.	German Railway Federal (DB)	DM 5710.0	DM 12,1666.4	DM 23770.0	51.2%
4.	France National Railway	FFR 17459.0	FFR 35700	FFR 84412.3	42.3%

Nodal agencies for Suburban Railways

28. In 1986, Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 were modified and following entry was inserted regarding the business to be performed by the Ministry of Urban Development:—

"14A. Planning and Co-ordination of urban transport systems, with technical planning of road-based systems being subject to items 22 and 23 under the Ministry of Transport (Department of Surface Transport) and technical Planning of rail-based system being subject to items 1 and 2 under the Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) in the list."

Consequent on the above change, Ministry of Urban Development become the nodal Ministry for planning and co-ordinating of Urban transport systems in various cities of the country. Processing of

proposals for new schemes for urban transport received from the State Governments and arranging Central assistance for them is now the responsibility of the Ministry of Urban Development. However, the Railways' role in respect of providing technical assistance for detailed planning is very vital in such project.

29. On a question by the Study Group of the Committee as to whether the Railways have been interacting with the Urban Development Ministry after accepting it the nodal Ministry and whether the Railway Ministry feel it advisable to revise the decision the Ministry in their written note stated :

> "Since transfer of the subject of Urban Transport to the Ministry of Urban Development, the following proposals for provision of Mass Rapid Transit Systems have been sent by the Ministry to the Railways for examination-comments.
>
> (i) Mass Rapid Transit System for Delhi.
>
> (ii) Bombay Urban Transport Project-II (Revised).
>
> (iii) Extension of Madras Bench to LUz RTs line to Taramani and Villivakkam.
>
> Necessary comments on the above, have been furnished to the Ministry of Urban Development from time to time. Ministry of Railways neither consider it necessary to transfer the subject back to them, nor of the opinion that the existing arrangement is detrimental to the commuters."

Operational Problems of Suburban Railway

30. On an enquiry on the interaction between administrative authorities at different suburban cities running the suburban rail services, the Ministry stated :

> "The operational problems in suburban train running are generally specific to the cities concerned. The authorities handling general train running deal with the problems in suburban traffic as well, as in most cases they are interlinked. However, certain common issues like increasing the number of units in an EMU rake, increasing suburban platforms lengths, inducting improved EMU stock etc. are co-ordinated by the Ministry."

31. On a further enquiry on the study made on the problem of the commuters in the cities served by the suburban railways, the Ministry have stated :

> "No formal separate study has been done by the Ministry of the problems of the commuters in the cities served by the Suburban Railways. Committee like the National Transport Planning Committee appointed by the Planning Commission and the Railway Reforms Committee appointed by the Government of India went into the entire gumut of rail transport problems including problems of commuters in the cities served by the suburban railways."

Recommendation and Conclusions

32. The Committee observed that the Western Railway Suburban Sector is showing profits for last three years. However, the Central Railway, Eastern Railway, South-Eastern Railway, and Southern Railway are showing continuous operational losses on the suburban sector. The losses on the Central Railway sector have shown a declining trende during the last three years, while the losses on the other railways are showing an upward trend. The Committee feel that suburban traffic which consists of mainly factory workers, office goers etc. are playing a vital role in the economic activities of the cities and industries located in suburban areas and thus contributing to the economic development of the country deserve a better deal from the Railways. The Committee are of the view that for this the Planning Commission should consider making a separate allocation for the Suburban Railways and the suburban-services may be subsidised more as is the case in several foreign countries.

33. There has been substantial increase in suburban fares and season ticket rates during the last three years. The increase is going beyond the reach of daily commuters. The ticketless travel is increasing with the result the yield from the fare increase is not proportionately increasing and causing a lot of discontentment among the daily commuters. The Committee, therefore, feel that before enhancing suburban fare and seasons ticket charges, Railways may have a dialogue with various Commuters Associations with a view to assess their ability to pay and as far as possible increase in suburban fares and season tickets should be avoided. Further they would like the Railways to bring down Suburban Rail Fares comparable to bus fares, particularly for the short distance.

34. The Committee are of the opinion that the question of nodal agency which has been transferred to Urban Development Ministry should be reviewed in the light on the experience gained during the past years and if found necessary, should be reverted to Ministry of Railways to cater to the needs of suburban traffic more effectively,. The Study Group do not accept the Ministry of Railways argument that they do not consider it necessary to transfer the subject back to them, nor the opinion that the existing arrangement is not detrimental to the commuters.

35. The Committee note from the information furnished by the Ministry that there has been a drop in the suburban passenger traffic in 1992-93. The Committee are not inclined to agree with this contention of Railways. There could not be such a drop in suburban traffic when it is patently seen that overcrowding in suburban trains has increased. The Committee feel that the suburban traffic as being determined from the number of tickets sold does not appear to give correct figures. Evidently the ticketless travel on the suburban

railways has increased. The Committee are of the view that some stringent steps should be taken to check ticketless travel to plug the revenue losses. In this regard they feel that arrangements for issuing tickets at various stations are inadequate. There is a need to open more ticket issue windows at Suburban Railway Stations to reduce waiting period for buying tickets. Also there is a need for making arrangements for issuing tickets at more Suburban Railway Stations and at city centres. The Committee recommend that arrangements for issuing tickets at various stations where tickets are presently not issued such as, Goregaon on Bombay (Diva) - Roha - Veer lines should be made on priority basis to reduce ticketless travel.

36. The Study Group of the Committee during the visit to Suburban Railways observed that there is overcrowding in suburban trains and congestion in Railway routes especially during peak hours. The Committee recommend that Railways should consider increasing the number of rakes in EMU locals as a short term measure. The Railways should also explore the possibilities of laying new lines and lay as many new lines as possible to reduce rail route congestion. Efforts should also be made to make optimum use of the alternative routes to decongest existing routes. The Committee feel that by doing so the Railways would be able to cater to more areas and more passengers.

37. The Committee feel that reducing the headway between two successive train from 5 minutes to four minutes and finally to 3 minutes (under proposal of Ministry of Railways) to ease overcrowding might lead to operational and other problems. Priority should therefore be given to diversification and opening of new lines/new routes. The Committee feel that wherever there is a railway line in suburban area catering only to goods traffic, with some investments the passenger service can also be introduced, thus getting the optimum use of the infrastructure.

The Committee recommend that any line from the metropolitan at a distance of within 150 kms. should be regarded as suburban line in order to keep pace with fast developing metropolitan area and due weightage should be given to such lines, New-line projects which also come under suburban sphere/area may be given due priority in implementation of the scheme.

38. The Committee are unhappy to find that punctuality in running of Suburban Railways is not adhered to resulting in great inconvenence to daily commuters and consequent overcrowding of suburban trains. The Committee feel that there is an urgent need to maintain time schedule of running suburban trains. The Ministry of Railways should pursue the matter with State Governments for replacing level crossings with ROBs/ RUBs so as to avoid slowing down of trains at the level crossings. At the same time the Railways should chalk out a more workable and meaningful new time table for Suburban trains in consultation with commuters' associations etc.

39. The Committee feel that some more consideration should be shown to handicapped and pregnant ladies commuters. The Railways should consider reserving a compartment in a coach for handicapped and pregnant ladies.

40. The Committee are of the view that there is a need for better maintenance of the suburban trains and platforms and the Railways should give more consideration to cleanliness of railway trains and platforms and to the facilities being provided to passengers. They feel that there is no effective machenism for redressal of complaints, grievances of the commuters. The Committee suggest that a separate cell should be constituted for prompt disposal of complaints of the commuters in each of the Metropolitan Cities and suggestions of the Commuters' Associations may be given due consideration by the Railways.

41. The Committee observe that in certain suburban sections in Western Railway, such as Borivli-Virar Section trains carry 4,200 commuters per train in the peak hours against the seating capacity of 880 and standing capacity of 880 i.e., 1760 per train. Crowding is so heavy that there are about 10 passengers to a square metre. The Committee recommend that top priority should be given to increase the lines/rakes in such crowded sections like Borivli-Virar Section. They also recommend that more suburban trains should be introduced in such busy sections.

42. During the visit of the Study Group of the Committee to Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, they heard the views and suggestions of the MPs, MLAs and local representatives. Specific suggestions/views given by them are dealt with in para 12, 13 and 14 of the report. The Committee consider the suggestions/views are very important and require critical examination for implementation. They would like the Ministry of Railways to examine each of these suggestions and undertake a serious study about the implementation of those suggestions vis-a-vis the availability of funds and try to implement them to ensure smooth running of suburban trains giving more comforts to passengers and also ease the overcrowding suburban trains. Keeping in view the fast expansion of suburban cities more specially Bombay, suggestions given at para 14 of this Report need serious consideration, for implementation.

43. The Committee would like to know the details of steps taken to examine and implement each of these recommendations within three months of the presentation of this Report.

NEW DELHI;
February 21, 1994

Phalguna 2, 1915 (Saka)

SOMNATH CHATTERJEE
Chairman,
Standing Committee in Railways